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TAGS: PFOR FR AG

SUBJECT: GISCARD MAKES PUBLIC STATEMENT ON FRANCO-
ALGERIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY. FEBRUARY 2 ISSUE OF NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR CARRIES
INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING ON FRANCO-
ALGERIAN RELATIONS. INTERVIEW CLEARLY DESIGNED TO STRIKE
CONCILIATORY NOTE, AND TO DEMONSTRATE THAT ALGERIA HAS
NO SUBSTANTIVE REASON TO CONSIDER FRANCE A HOSTILE POWER.
FACTS THAT INTERVIEW PRINTED IN OPPOSITION PUBLICATION
AND THAT INTERVIEWER IS BOUMEDIENE'S FRIEND JEAN DANIEL
LEND CERTAIN CREDIBILITY TO GISCARD'S DECLARATION. END
SUMMARY.

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1. GISCARD INTERVIEW IN FEBRUARY 2 NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR ON FRANCO-ALGERIAN RELATIONS MADE FOLLOWING POINTS: PROBLEMS CONCERNING TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS SHOULD NOT BE POLITICIZED. THERE IS NO BASIS FOR FRANCO-ALGERIAN TENSION. GISCARD NOTED THAT WHILE DIFFERENT ALGERIAN SOURCES HAVE EXPRESSED HOSTILITY TOWARD FRANCE, BOUMEDIENE HIMSELF HAS NOT DONE SO.

2. ON IDEOLOGICAL LEVEL, GISCARD SAID ALGERIA HAS OPTED FOR SOCIALIST PATH TO DEVELOPMENT, AND FRANCE ACCEPTS FACT THAT THIS IS IRREVERSIBLE. THIS DOES NOT PLACE OBSTACLE IN WAY OF GOOD RELATIONS. FRANCE ENJOYS GOOD RELATIONS WITH IRAQ, FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH IS ANOTHER ARAB SOCIALIST COUNTRY. FRANCE'S GOOD RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO AND SPAIN ARE NOT DIRECTED AGAINST ALGERIA.

3. GOF'S ONLY RELATIONSHIP TO SAHARA CONFLICT IS THROUGH UN VOTE, WHERE FRANCE FAVORED NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SPAIN ON ONE HAND AND MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ON THE OTHER. FRANCE IS OPPOSED TO CREATION OF NEW MINISTATE IN SPANISH SAHARA. THIS DISAGREEMENT WITH ALGERIA SHOULD NOT BE GROUNDS FOR HOSTILITY. FRANCE SUPPORTS ALGERIA ON OTHER RELATED ISSUES SUCH AS ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN DISPUTE OVER BORDER AT TINDOUF. FRANCE'S ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO NOT DIRECTED AGAINST ALGERIA. THIS IS HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS NO CONNECTION WITH SAHARA DISPUTE. FRANCE WOULD BE WILLING SELL ARMS TO ALGERIA IF ASKED. FRANCE WOULD BE WILLING TO PLAY MEDIATING ROLE IN CURRENT DISPUTE, BUT ONLY IF ASKED BY BOTH SIDES.

4. PROBLEMS CREATED BY INDIVIDUAL COMPANY DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE ESCALATED TO POLITICAL DISPUTES BETWEEN ALGERIAN AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS.

5. COMMENT: NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR IS OPPOSITION PUBLICATION WHICH NORMALLY CRITICIZES GOF POLICY TOWARD ALGERIA IN PARTICULAR AND LDC'S IN GENERAL. INTERVIEW WAS DESIGNED TO GET GISCARD TO COMMENT ON ALGERIAN-FRENCH RELATIONS FOR FIRST TIME. GISCARD WAS WISE TO AGREE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTERVIEW BECAUSE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR HAS PRO-ALGERIAN IMAGE. IN RADIO INTERVIEW, EDITOR JEAN DANIEL SAID HE HAD RECEIVED POSITIVE REACTIONS TO INTERVIEW FROM GOOD CONTACTS IN GOA. ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO PARIS WAS QUOTED IN MONDAY'S PRESS AS TAKING FAVORABLE LINE TOWARD INTERVIEW. HOWEVER, INTERVIEW DOES NOT ELIMINATE MAIN ALGERIAN GRIEVANCES--UNBALANCED TRADE IN FRANCE'S FAVOR, BAD TREATMENT OF ALGERIAN IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN FRANCE,

GOF'S ACCEPTANCE OF MOROCCAN ABSORPTION OF SAHARA, AND
GOF'S GENERAL OPPOSITION TO ALGERIA'S RADICAL LEADERSHIP
ROLE AMONG LDC'S. GISCARD IS CLEARLY DETERMINED, HOW-
EVER, TO AVOID ENGAGING IN POLEMICS, AND TO PLACE ANY
RESPONSIBILITY FOR BAD RELATIONS ON ALGIERS.
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